



**Federal Aviation
Administration**

FOCUSFAA

It's All About You

Issue 10 » August 16, 2005



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Final Bows at Oshkosh

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“We’re in our element here,” said Tim Wright,

manager of the Automated Flight Service Station at Oshkosh during the Experimental Aviation Association’s annual AirVenture 2005, which ended July 31. “We love what we do and it shows. Working this event for the week is so rewarding because we get actual ‘face time’ with pilots, and we can interact with them directly.”

In their temporary flight service station set up on one side of the FAA hangar at the Oshkosh air show, specialists spent their days briefing pilots about weather and flight

plans, and talking about planes and flying. With computers booted up and ready to go, briefings began early in the morning and didn’t end until about 8 p.m., when the facility closed down for the night. It revved up again at 7 a.m. and pilots were already in line to speak with a flight specialist.

Briefings took place not only at the facility, but also at the mobile flight service stations located on the grounds of the air show. These mobile units were

developed two years ago and enable pilots to check in from locations on the far sides of the fields.

On-site briefings were handled by veteran Dale Walker, who put in appearances at several venues



Busy flight service station where pilots are briefed.

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where aerobatic pilots gather before their exhibition flights. Walker provided the latest weather to pilots who restore, fly and live for vintage military aircraft.

Amid the week's excitement, however, there was time for a more reflective tone. The mail brought reduction-in-force notices to flight service employees. The notices stated there are 60 days until Lockheed Martin becomes their employer and they will be separated from government service. This is a harsh reality that is moving ever closer. Despite the news, the professionalism of these employees ruled the day.

Several flight service specialists spoke about their plans. Most had taken a pro-active approach to their futures and applied for positions with the contractor, or applied elsewhere in the agency earlier in the year.

Looking Toward the Future

Tim Wright is planning to work for the contractor in Dallas/Fort Worth,

although he regrets having to leave behind the Green Bay, Wis., area he loves.

Dale Walker also has a job lined up in Dallas/Fort Worth, but expressed concern for colleagues, especially those who may be left behind.

Jim Smith is moving on, perhaps to Prescott, Ariz., with his wife. "We always liked it there in terms of a retirement lifestyle. Who knows what this move will bring?"

Leslie Moritz from the San Diego Flight Service Station has a job lined up and is optimistic about the future, but sad about how the A-76 process dragged on for so long. "Some people let this get the better of them," she said.

Lydia Rojas says her philosophy of life has always been to remain positive and flexible. Having moved from Saint Croix, Virgin Islands many years ago and worked in Puerto Rico, North

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Carolina and Florida, she is no stranger to picking up stakes and starting over again.

This past year, Rojas received a special honor. “I was elected Flight Service Specialist of the Year in my home station at Lakeland, Fla. I am very proud to be honored by my colleagues,” she said. “It means so much to me to come here to Oshkosh. This is the World Series of Flight Service,” she said.

As for the future, “I am lucky, I guess, as I can retire,” she told me. “Then I will work for the contractor at a legacy station — so, yes, I am very lucky.”

This is Dan Kane’s fifth year working as a specialist at Oshkosh and he received a plaque to honor his service

at AirVenture, as did Ray Patterson. As Kane explained, “I can move on to Prescott, Ariz., but my wife and I have all our family ties [in the Milton/Janesville, Wis. area] and I am not sure we want to move.”

Kane recognizes pilots at Oshkosh from year to year. “For me, it’s like seeing old friends here at Oshkosh. I will miss this. Also, employees at our facility have become very close over the

years.” In preparing to confront the decision about whether to stay or relocate, Kane has been taking some classes and “broadening my skills.”

“Perhaps it is time to change careers again,” said Kane, who is 42. “I am still young, so I can try something else.” ✈



Lydia Rojas, flight service specialist of the year from Oakland, Florida.

In The Pink



A typical scene at the Oshkosh Tower.

All those neon pink shirts. They're kind of hard to miss. But that's the idea, of course.

Air traffic controllers working at Oshkosh were easy to spot in their neon pink shirts. Whether deployed at the tiny house trailer situated on a hill just north of Fisk, Wis. — where aircraft approaches are monitored — perched on top of the Moo-Cows on the runway, or working in the small air traffic control tower, controllers make sure thousands of planes get in and get out of Oshkosh.

Wanda Adelman, hub manager at the Milwaukee Tower, is in her fourth year of leading air traffic activities at the show. Along with Quality Assurance Specialist Art Hillmer and Administrative Officer Patty Hudson, Adelman has been working on this year's navigation procedures since last year. "Everyday has a little Oshkosh in it," Wanda explains. "It takes about nine months to plan this operation, to work out procedures, airport coordination, NOTAMs and letters of agreement regarding mass arrivals."

Adelman was in charge of 77 controllers selected from 197 applicants representing 17 states. Training begins the same day the tower operation commences because during this hectic week, these pink shirts will staff

In The Pink



MOO-COWS, or mobile operations and communications workstations, might look like a hijacked hay wagon, but are actually mobile platforms that support communications equipment. They help controllers talk to pilots and the tower and each other, enabling the FAA to split air traffic operations between tower and field, and handle departures on a daily basis that can surpass even the world's busiest airports. Since the tower cab isn't big enough to handle the extra personnel required to control all these aircraft, MOO-COWs put controllers right into the middle of the action...and they love it. As for the name, they are so-called to reflect Wisconsin's "Dairy State" moniker.

the “World’s Busiest Air Traffic Control Tower”—busier than Atlanta or Chicago O’Hare on at least one day—the day pilots and fans depart Oshkosh.

From The Safety Side Of The House

Administrator Marion Blakey arrived at Oshkosh with a delegation from the Office of Regulation and Certification. During her packed 2-day schedule, Blakey and her entourage met with various industry groups, including the Vintage Aircraft Association, Warbird enthusiasts (later, she strapped in for a flight in a P-51 Mustang), sport pilots and light sport aircraft manufacturers.

She fielded questions at the annual “Meet the Administrator” session that focused mostly on aspects of implementing the sport pilot/light sport aircraft rule and sport pilot medical issues, but there were also questions about certification, loss of traffic information service in

In The Pink

some locations, protection of general aviation airports, and the use of the direct user access terminal system to file flight plans that won't violate air defense identification zones.

Administrator Blakey greets controllers at the Oshkosh Tower.



Throughout the week, in a hangar that seats hundreds, the FAA Safety Center presentations drew solid attendance, including some standing-room-only sessions. The list of presenters is formidable with credentials that point to first-hand knowledge on a vast array of safety subjects. A testament to the speakers is the number of questions asked by the audience, demonstrating their attention to the briefings and interest in the speakers' technical knowledge and experience.

Chris Blum, who manages the temporary regional operations center, did an exceptional job ensuring seamless communications between Oshkosh and Headquarters, and prepping for the administrator's visit. Estela Ponce and Pat Stasiek, both part of the regional administrator's staff, created a home-away-from-home by setting up an office for FAA staff and visitors at the center.

Down at the temporary Flight Standards District Office (FSDO), or the "FSDO

In The Pink

shack,” so named because of its housing in a small garage on the edge of the runway, Flight Standards employees are on duty to investigate fender-benders or more serious accidents. Mike Monroe, operations supervisor of the Milwaukee FSDO, has about 10 inspectors from his FSDO in Oshkosh to monitor the aviation events. All of the waivers and approvals come out his office. They were set up near the flight line.

There, Bambi Kehler from the Great Lakes region worked her first air show.

Kehler said it was fun to work the show because she never knew who would walk into the FSDO shack. At that moment, a French pilot walked in seeking his certification papers from the FAA. Kehler offered to have them faxed from Milwaukee to Oshkosh so that he could finish his paperwork while at the show. He was appreciative of Kehler’s concern for his convenience. He was traveling in a vintage French warplane and was in a party of visitors that included France’s top-ranking civil aviation official. ←



Among employees working at the Oshkosh FSDO were (from left) Raymond A. Peterson, Robert K. Gessert, John H. Thiem (FSDO manager), Raymond P. Yank and Bambi Kehler.

Traffic Flow Management

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FAA is preparing to modernize its traffic flow management (TFM) system for the first time since the mid-1980s following a recent go-ahead from the Joint Resources Council, the executive council that must approve major acquisitions and investments.

The modernization program will be complex because it will proceed on two tracks at once. FAA will continue to upgrade the current system to meet customers'

immediate needs while the modernization planning goes on in the background. All the while, FAA will ensure that coding for the current

system will be reusable in the modernized version.

"We can continue to get benefits out to our

users but not run the risk of having to redevelop the system again when the time comes along for the modernization," said Ahmad Usmani, manager of advanced technology development for TFM. Modernization is planned for completion in September 2008.

TFM is a system that gathers flight data from around

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the country on a real-time basis, creating a continuous updated model of the National Airspace System. While an en route center or TRACON or tower focuses on its own piece of the airspace, TFM gives air traffic officials a much broader picture for planning purposes.

The current system was introduced as a prototype in the mid-80s, and it proved so popular that it has remained in use. "It was never really designed to be a daily-use system," said Usmani. Upgrades were added to it over the years, and airlines started participating in the program. Still, even as a prototype, it revolutionized the way FAA thought about air traffic control.

Before TFM, the agency used something called the central flow control facility in which Headquarters told the field what to do. The current system, and its future

version, is more collaborative in involving the field facilities as well as customers.

Modernization will reengineer the core software. A new relational database using industry standards will make it easier and quicker to manipulate data, make testing and maintenance easier, and not require as much written code as the current system.

Usmani sees a business case for the modernization. "By modernizing, making things cheaper in the long run, improving the quality of service, we make it more convenient for people to fly," said Usmani.

The modernization project is planned for initial operating capability in September 2008. ✈

Getting Fired Up

The FAA is playing an important role in the aviation industry's quest to develop a fire suppression system that is not halon-based. When Eclipse Aviation recently received certification from FAA for a fire-extinguishing system using PBr3, a new non-gaseous agent, it marked an important step forward and underlay the agency's important support for this research.

While effective in suppressing fires, halon was found to have many environmentally adverse effects and is no longer manufactured. The search for a halon replacement became imperative and the FAA has been working closely with the aviation industry to find a halon replacement.



Rao Edupuganti (left) watches as Eclipse Aviation employees prepare a fire test rig. They include lead technician Kurt Encinias, fire test engineer Ben Masfield and David Snowden, director of propulsion systems.

Eclipse worked closely with the Rotorcraft Directorate in the Southwest Region to pass the regulatory hurdles for approval of PBr3 by the Aircraft Certification Office. Forefront in the mind of Ken Harness, Eclipse's vice president for engineering, was getting FAA acceptance on the method

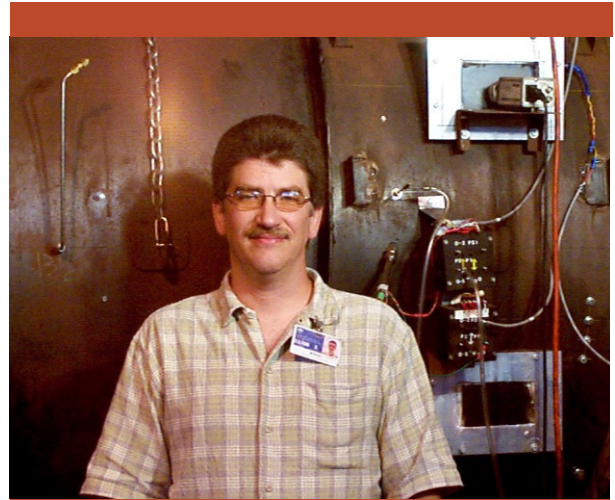
Getting Fired Up

for certifying the new agent. The FAA was “very open to the idea” of using actual fire tests on a full mock-up of an Eclipse engine to test PBr3, said Harness. “Typically, FAA is seen as stodgy and bureaucratic and didn’t want to change. I did not find that at all.”

“[The PBr3 concept] is totally new,” said Rao Edupuganti, the Southwest Region engineer who took the lead on this regulatory project. “We wanted to help them with this. Doug and myself were there tweaking to fine tune Eclipse’s test rig so that tests would be a simulation of actual conditions.”

Edupuganti’s reference is to Doug

“One of our technical challenges was how to get fires started [in the test setting].”



Ingerson is seen here in front of the Technical Center’s nacelle fire simulator.

Ingerson, the FAA’s project engineer for engine halon replacement at the William J. Hughes Technical Center. Because there was no precedent for certifying a halon-replacement agent, Ingerson has been working on a method indicating how one would demonstrate a halon replacement candidate is equivalent to halon. However, this novel agent required a separate review given Eclipse’s independent

Getting Fired Up

approach to replace halon in the Eclipse 500's engines.

"We asked [Doug] to sit in on the FAA/Eclipse meetings and see if we're heading in the right direction," said Edupuganti.

"He had been working halon replacement for years and years," recalled Harness.

"One of our technical challenges was how to get fires started [in the test setting]. We implemented his suggestions in our [test] rig."

Ingerson saw his responsibility was "to make certain important issues regarding fire safety were addressed," such as ensuring adequate fire extinguishment across the flight envelope and fire extinguishing agent compatibility with the airframe and crew.

After three rounds of extensive questioning, Eclipse produced an outcome that was satisfactory to the Ft. Worth Aircraft Certification Office.

Ingerson expressed "cautious optimism" about Eclipse's project because, like all new products, it comes with its own concerns. Still, said Ingerson, "This might provide the kick in the seat to others to get moving in the direction [of using non-Ozone depleting fire suppressant in engine nacelles]."

"I think it's a real success story and I was very happy with the FAA," Harness said.

Ingerson said the exercise with Eclipse was worthwhile. "Ken Harness and his associates are a very professional group of people." ✈

Your Two Cents

Feedback

A Chance To Speak Up

I just read “Tracking the Mission” in Focus FAA (Aug. 2, 2005 edition). Since our office in the Air Traffic Organization is safety investigations and we coordinate accident investigation — including search and rescue — I think it would have been nice to let us comment on your story prior to publication.

Before ATO, communication was coordinated throughout the offices within Air Traffic to ensure the service spoke with a common voice and was thorough. Notwithstanding, the efforts by the pair of individuals within Denver ARTCC contribute highly to the success of the agency and are very much appreciated. However, there are other teams that support search and rescue activities as well.

Most facilities, service areas and FAA Headquarters have people who are responsible to support search and rescue activity. These dedicated individuals often spend many off-duty hours supporting

various rescue organizations and providing feedback to the agency’s upper management structure.

While the low-profile accidents don’t generate much attention, there can be significant resources expended in the attempt to locate a downed aircraft and, quite frankly, save a life. Many times in the past few years our office has coordinated search and rescue efforts throughout the country and we often rely on teams such as the one in Denver ARTCC. We also use top-notch, non-agency personnel including the military, and Civil Air Patrol.

And, yes, we could do a better job at recognizing those efforts and to do it through your article would have been a good one.

Mark W. Olsen
New England Region



Your Two Cents

Ceilings, Not Targets

When we speak about operational errors and operational deviations, the FAA as a whole needs to speak “ceilings” and not “targets.” Targets are usually something that you aim for, as in trying to hit a bull’s-eye. We (the FAA) are not aiming for a set number of operational errors or deviations. In fact, we are attempting to diminish these occurrences. We must begin to use the term “ceiling.” This is a point that seems to be lost in the translation from Quality Assurance to the written word.

Jose Joga
Eastern Region

Plan for Success, Not Failure

Referencing the FAA Flight Plan, hold us accountable for something we actually have control over, not on-time arrivals or departures, not general aviation accidents in Alaska, not en-route changes over the ocean. This is a plan for failure. Let us plan for success, not failure. We do

not control the weather when it delays flights and [we] should not be held accountable for it. Make the plan realistic and meaningful.

For example: on July 22, 2005 I flew from Orlando to Milwaukee. The plane was 30 minutes late because the caterer had a power failure and the food was delivered to the plane late. Why would FAA employees be held accountable for such a delay? Yet we FAA employees are punished for such problems when we have nothing to do with them. This system is causing very low morale in the FAA because it is a lose-lose plan. We should strive for a win-win plan.

Darold Silcott
Central Region

(Editor’s note: The Flight Plan’s “on-time” metric was changed this year to exclude delays caused by airlines.) ✈

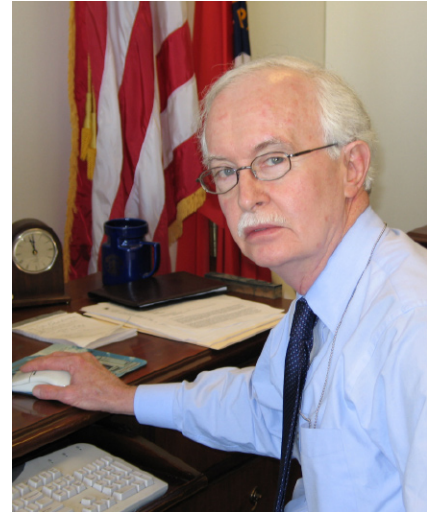


Now This

Rushworth M. Kidder, author of the books “Moral Courage” and “How Good People Make Tough Choices” came to the FAA recently for an executive seminar on “Moral Courage: The Essence of 21st Century Leadership.” Ethics and morality are favorite topics of seminars these days, in the wake of the scandals at Enron, WorldCom, and among the clergy, to name just a few. “Tsk-tsking” the lapse of morals in others, especially the high and mighty, is a great spectator sport. But reflecting on these examples to shed

light on our own behavior is a contact sport. And that’s not nearly as much fun. But, that’s exactly what Kidder was asking us to do.

Naturally, since I am in the business of communication, this seminar got me thinking about compromises in communications. And that in turn brought to mind a recently published best-seller called “On B.S.” by Harry G. Frankfurt. That’s not the full title, but you can fill in the blanks. B.S. is pervasive, not just in Washington, although some of its most accomplished practitioners reside in this



Gerald E. Lavey

town. The pernicious thing about B.S. is that people actually begin to believe what they say after awhile, no matter how removed from actual fact, and they can say it with a tear in their eye and a catch in their breath. Look at the beating that truth and

Now This

facts take during political campaigns.

So, what does that have to do with the FAA? A lot. Kidder said that a strong sense of values, such as truth and honesty, and the ability to have them inform our decisions literally have life or death consequences for the public safety business we're in. He uses the examples of Chernobyl and Exxon Valdez to make his point, and he says the more that technology advances, the greater potential for harm, unless we buttress it with strong individual and organizational ethics. And we

can do that, he says, only if we have an ethical culture — translated as “the way we do things around here” — that condones moral courage and encourages its expression.

Honest, straightforward communication is an organization's strongest adhesive and critical to the FAA's mission, and dishonest, evasive language is where the cracks start to show. This may sound like a stretch, but in my opinion once any organization — business, government, or church — condones the devaluation of language and

makes it serve whatever short-term purpose it wants and promotes an organizational culture that does the same, that's an organization not just on a slippery slope, but in free fall. ✈

— Gerald E. Lavey

Deputy Assistant
Administrator for Internal
Communications

AOA HIGHLIGHTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STRICTER CONTROL OF SERVICE CONTRACTS NOW REQUIRED:

Administrator announces new steps to increase financial oversight of service contracts.

STURGELL FEATURED IN WEBCAST INTERVIEW:

A conversation on work-related and personal issues with the Deputy Administrator.

WHY FLYING IS SAFER NOW:

Christian Science Monitor says the chances of surviving a crash are far greater than they used to be ten, twenty years ago. FAA deserves a lot of credit.

EVERYTHING WENT RIGHT WHEN IT ALL WENT WRONG:

Focus FAA editor Jim Tise tells the stories of some FAAers who have helped make flying safer now.

READER FEEDBACK:

Airport's Ken Jacobs says a longer runway safety area might have kept the Toronto accident from ever happening in the first place.

JOIN ICAO, SEE THE WORLD:

ICAO jobs open for those interested in careers in international aviation. Deadline is August 29.

SUPERSIZING OF AMERICA LEADS TO NEW WEIGHT GUIDELINES:

Airlines using new guidelines to calculate weight and center of gravity.

THE LAST WORD:

The dog days of August in Washington. A movie recommendation.

STRICTER CONTROL OF SERVICE CONTRACTS NOW REQUIRED:

On August 11th, the Administrator announced several new steps the agency will be taking to increase financial oversight of FAA service contracts.

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As many of you know, every year, we spend more than \$1 billion on contracts for services that range from software development agreements to consulting agreements on areas where the FAA lacks internal expertise to maintenance contracts on non-FAA equipment. Many of these services are done under one of three “umbrella” agreements with companies that are either pre-qualified or have competed to be eligible for selection.

In addition to making sure we are strictly following our own Acquisition Management System (AMS) regulations and procedures, the

Administrator’s memo to the executive management team outlines specific actions to improve our financial management.

“As you know,” she writes, “the agency faces some very difficult financial choices ahead....

In this environment, we simply must control our expenses, one of the largest of which is our services contracts, and we must also ensure that every taxpayer dollar is spent wisely, effectively, and properly. That means we have to look on a more fundamental level at the financial and contractual controls we have in place to avoid unnecessary, improper, or

avoidable expenditures on outside services.”

Initial measures call for: (1) amending the procurement policies to place stricter controls on sole source contracts and requiring the Deputy Administrator’s okay before any such contracts can be let; (2) having the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) exercise greater oversight and fiscal control over all agency procurements, including support service contracts; and (3) requiring in-depth training on procurement integrity for all FAA program officials, as well as contracting officers. This training must be

AOA HIGHLIGHTS

completed within the next six months. For more on this, read the [Administrator's memo](#).

STURGELL FEATURED IN WEBCAST INTERVIEW:

We had an [interview with Deputy Administrator Bobby Sturgell](#) a couple of weeks ago. No heavy discussion, just a chitchat so that people can get a chance to see and know him better. He's an interesting guy who stays below the radar and this interview is intended to let employees see him up close and personal. He hates it when I bring up the fact that he was a Top Gun in the Navy, for example, but we

brought it up anyway. So he reluctantly discusses that topic. We also asked him about his son, Ben, whom Bobby and his wife adopted from Russia a few years ago, and the process they had to go through to complete the adoption. We also discussed his perceptions of how things are going here at the FAA, now that he has been here for almost three years. Also, how he and the Administrator divvy up the work of managing the agency. [read more](#)

WHY FLYING IS SAFER NOW:

That's the title of an excellent article that appeared recently in the [Christian Science Monitor](#)

following the Toronto accident. You should read it in its entirety, but here are the first few paragraphs to get you started.

“Contrary to popular belief, most airline accidents are now survivable.

While people used words like ‘miraculous’ to describe the fact that everyone got out alive of the Air France jet that crashed upon landing in Toronto this week, aviation experts are also crediting 20 years of advances in technology, training, and safety practices.

AOA HIGHLIGHTS

“From improved fire retardants in the cabin to slow the spread of flames and smoke so people can be evacuated to ‘phenomenal’ weather tracking devices that can alert crews to wind shear and violent storm cells, the combined efforts of the federal government and the aviation community have made flying far safer than ever before.

“Twenty years ago, the chances of surviving a crash were indeed minimal. While the accident rate has declined only slightly since then, the seriousness of those crashes has declined significantly.”

EVERYTHING WENT RIGHT WHEN IT ALL WENT WRONG:

To help put a human face on that story, Focus FAA editor Jim Tise [interviewed Cynthia Corbett](#) and others who have been instrumental in making flying safer over the years.

“There was kind of a silent cheer that went through the whole building, I think,” said Cynthia Corbett, who learned about all of the survivors while working at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center. “The fact that everybody got out made us think we’re doing something right with our training, research and interaction

with industry,” said Corbett, a human factors specialist in cabin safety. [read more](#)

READER FEEDBACK:

In response to an August 3 News Update (“A Big, Giant, Collective ... Whew!”) on the Toronto accident, Ken Jacobs from the FAA’s Airport Engineering Division writes:

“FAA and the Office of the Associate Administrator for Airports have been working hard for several years to prevent these sorts of accidents from ever happening. Although only preliminary, the news

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accounts that I heard say the aircraft came to rest about 600 feet from the end of the runway. Our efforts to improve runway safety areas (RSA) in support of the Flight Plan are geared at providing a graded area that extends as much as 1000 feet beyond the end of the runway. The RSA reduces or eliminates the risk of damage to aircraft in the event of an overrun such as what happened this week. If a standard runway safety area were in place in Toronto, in all likelihood it would not have even made the news. The aircraft would have stopped intact; the passengers would have departed; and the aircraft

would have been towed back to the apron for future service.

“We also recognize that airports are often constrained by nearby natural objects and infrastructure development. That is why FAA, in cooperation with industry, developed the Engineered Materials Arresting System (EMAS). EMAS is a cellular cement material that crushes under the weight of an aircraft and is designed to bring aircraft to a safe, predictable and reliable stop. Seventeen EMAS beds have been installed nationwide since 2000 and many more are planned. I only hope

that we continue to get support from our airport-operator partners to complete all practical improvements to meet our safety goals. Of all the things that we can do to improve safety, keeping our fingers crossed is not one of them.”

JOIN ICAO, SEE THE WORLD: International leadership is a major FAA priority and one of four strategic goals in the FAA Flight Plan. If you are interested in branching out into the international aviation arena, you may want to consider working with the [International Civil](#)

AOA HIGHLIGHTS

Aviation Organization (ICAO) at its headquarters in Montreal, Canada or at one of its seven regional offices.

Current vacancies are:

- Deputy Regional Director, P-5, Cairo
- Deputy Regional Director, P-5, Dakar
- Field Operations Officer (Technical Cooperation Bureau), P-4, Montreal
- Technical Officer, Operations/Airworthiness, P-4, Montreal
- Regional Officer, Air Traffic Management, P-4, Cairo

- Technical Officer, Accident Investigation and Prevention, P-4, Montreal

SUPERSIZING OF AMERICA LEADS TO NEW WEIGHT GUIDELINES:

The effects of obesity and our overweight society are now hitting the airlines.

The Chicago Tribune reports that the weight of the average air traveler and their carry-on items together is weighing in at a hefty 200 pounds each, on average. In response to the supersizing of passengers and their loads, guidelines used by airlines to calculate weight and the center of gravity have

been revised. These factors affect calculations for takeoff speed and amount of fuel to carry – which leads to increasing costs. This trend is putting carriers on a diet. Many are shedding magazines, seat phones and even life vests in some cases. Obesity in the U.S. has risen dramatically in the past two decades according to the National Center for Health Statistics, which reports that more than 60 million people in this country today are considered obese.

AOA HIGHLIGHTS

The Last Word:

As a youngster in Omaha, watching dogs lying lazily in the shade during hot August days, I thought that's where the term, "the dog days of summer," came from. But, as I later found out, the term comes from the Dog Star Sirius. According to one on-line source, "in ancient Egypt, the dog star, under the name Sihor, rose along side the Sun when summer was at its very hottest. The ancient Egyptians celebrated the return of the 'dog days,' because the rising of the Sun, combined with the Dog Star, announced a

very good thing. It was during this time each and every year that the River Nile would flood, reviving all of the surrounding parched land. The 'dog days' were said to last from 20 days prior to the conjunction to 20 days after. Thus, the start of the Egyptian sacred year was marked by the reappearance of the Dog Star rising with the Sun."

If you're looking to get out of the sun, go sit in an air-conditioned theater and watch the movie "The Beautiful Country," a story about a young Vietnam man—a pariah in his own country

because his father was an America soldier fighting in Vietnam. The young man flees Vietnam, ends up in a Malaysian refugee camp, and finally finds his way to America. Nice story.

Gerald E. Lavey

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Deviations

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